

JUNE 16, 2018 SPEECH BY MR. ALEX MALAPANE. Alex is an Author, Speaker and a Professional. He is the senior pastor and president of Christ Sanctuary Church in Pretoria.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITY

Poor people with disabilities living in South Africa are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to accessing education, health care services, banking services and many other services.

Over the last two decades the South African government has passed several pieces of legislation to ensure that people with disabilities are included in society and are able to access services such as health care. This has included a national disability grant as well as regulations that all government buildings provide ramps so that people with disabilities can easily access them. We commend the government and civil society groups that championed this move.

Programme Director, according to official statistics 7.5% of South Africans live with disability. This amounts to at least 4,12 million people living with some form of disability. In the rest of the world, this figure sits at about 15%. It's quite possible that the South African figure doesn't reflect the full extent of disability in the country because of under-reporting. This means that there is a possibility of the percentage been too high.

Programme Director, global studies show that the top three barriers stopping people with disabilities from using health facilities are cost, lack of services near to where they live and transportation. Another common challenge is the issue relating to privacy when they visit a public or private health care.

But what is disability programme director, disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested. Over recent decades, the disabled people's movement together with numerous researchers from the social and health sciences have identified the role of social and physical barriers in disability. The transition from an individual, medical perspective to a structural, social

perspective has been described as the shift from a “medical model” to a “social model” in which people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their bodies.

A person’s environment has a huge impact on the experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments create disability by creating barriers to participation and inclusion. Examples of the possible negative impact of the environment include:

- a Deaf individual without a sign language interpreter
- a wheelchair user in a building without an accessible bathroom or elevator
- a blind person using a computer without screen-reading software.

There are many form of disability that is created by the environment. The environment may be changed to improve health conditions, prevent impairments, and improve outcomes for persons with disabilities. Such changes can be brought about by legislation, policy changes, capacity building, or technological developments leading to, for instance:

- accessible design of the built environment and transport;
- signage to benefit people with sensory impairments;
- more accessible health, rehabilitation, education, and support services;
- more opportunities for work and employment for persons with disabilities.

The diversity of disability

Disability is very diverse. The disability experience resulting from the interaction of health conditions, personal factors, and environmental factors varies greatly. Therefore interventions should vary and carefully considered.

Disability and Human Rights

Disability is a human rights issue because:

- People with disabilities experience inequalities – for example, when they are denied equal access to health care, employment, education, or political participation because of their disability.
- People with disabilities are subject to violations of dignity – for example, when they are subjected to violence, abuse, prejudice, or disrespect because of their disability.
- Some people with disability are denied autonomy – for example, when they are subjected to involuntary sterilization, or when they are confined in institutions against their will, or when they are regarded as legally incompetent because of their disability.
- There are many human rights issues programme director. I am only indicating the few examples.

Physical barriers

Many people living with disability have to manage hills, cross rivers or use gravel and uneven roads to access education, health care facilities and government services. The distances they travel are vast between services and amenities. Travelling on foot is often not an option and taxis are expensive. The result is that people with disabilities receive health care less often and in turn feel that they have poorer physical and mental health. They drop out from education and other important endeavours due to lack of accessibility. Sometimes the information packs on the shelves are not in a format or language they can understand.

Disability and Development

Disability is a development issue, because of its bidirectional link to poverty: disability may increase the risk of poverty, and poverty may increase the risk of disability. A growing body of empirical evidence from across the world indicates that people with disabilities and their families are more likely to experience economic and social disadvantage than those without disability.

The onset of disability may lead to the worsening of social and economic well-being and poverty through a multitude of channels including the adverse impact on education, employment, earnings, and increased expenditures related to disability.

Children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, thus experiencing limited opportunities for human capital formation and facing reduced employment opportunities and decreased productivity in adulthood.

Programme director, people with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and generally earn less even when employed. Both employment and income outcomes appear to worsen with the severity of the disability. It is harder for people with disabilities to benefit from development and escape from poverty due to discrimination in employment, limited access to transport, and lack of access to resources to promote self-employment and livelihood activities. People with disabilities may have extra costs resulting from disability – such as costs associated with medical care or assistive devices, or the need for personal reasons.

Bad attitudes

In addition to these challenges, people living with disability encounter negative attitudes from government employees, banking service employees, health care providers and many others who treat them differently from other people.

Improving the situation

Programme Director, there are several changes that could improve the lives of people with disabilities to access health care.

- Information at health care facilities should be accessible easily in a language that all can read. In a format that all can read. Include information packs for people living with disability to be able to understand it.
- Mobile health clinics would help. This would mean that people with disabilities could access health care services more regularly.
- In addition, health care workers should be trained to better deal with people with disabilities so that attitudinal barriers can be addressed.
- And lastly, the community needs to be educated about disability and how it can help create a more inclusive environment.

In conclusion I would like to propose the following to the President of our country Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa.

1. Health care services should be prioritised for people living with disability. In fact people living with disability should access private care facilities for free.
2. Access to information should be granted to people living with disability. If information can be packed in terms of typed papers, why not make it readily available for people living who cannot see. Like increasing accessibility.
3. It should be compulsory for any government meeting or community meeting to have a sign language interpreter and also have information including programmes and other documents readily made to suit people who cannot see.
4. Honourable President, our organisation has a plan in place to develop software that is user friendly, which can be used to aid communication for people who cannot speak or hear. This software requires capital injection in order for it to be developed. Kindly assist us to unlock this funding.
5. We kindly request your office to consider including a dedicated ministry, or expand the current Ministry of Women and Children to be Ministry of Women, Children and People living with Disability.
6. Honourable President, have a dedicated day in the national calendar for people living with disability. If 7.5% (4.12 million) of the population are people living with disability, surely this calls for your attention.
7. Hon President, let's create opportunities and skills development opportunities for people living with disability. Like take a person with disability to work programme.

An opportunity to correct error

Rudzanbilu Holding working together with the team of people living with disability are in a process of developing a software and will make the lives of people living with disability to be improved. This will enhance communication.

Programme director, this is an opportunity for private donors, private companies, government, civil society groups and the community to join hands with us. The president of South Africa Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa has called us as a nation to the "Thuma Mina" campaign. Hon President, we are here. We are ready. Send us. "Thuma Thina". We are ready Hon President.

Help us unlock the funding required to develop this powerful tool that will change the lives of people living with disability. We are ready. Thuma thina. Send us. We urge everyone to be a role player. We are ready to meet with anyone who want to be part of this. Send us.

Thanks you.

Disabled World